



Foggy Bottom News

SEPTEMBER 1986

Published for and by the citizens of Foggy Bottom

Volume 31, No. 1

FBA & ANC Seek Historic Landmark Designation for Circle Theatre

The Foggy Bottom Association and Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A on September 10 filed a joint application with the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board asking that the Circle Theatre be designated an historic landmark.

Long a neighborhood landmark at 2105 Pennsylvania Avenue, the Circle Theatre is the oldest operating moving picture theatre in Washington. It is also generally acknowledged to be the first repertory film theatre in the city. Located at its present site since 1911, the original federal style building in which it was installed was modified to accommodate the theatre. In 1935 the building was redesigned to hold 700 persons in a functional and wholly unadorned auditorium fronted by a decorative facade on the south elevation that combines Art Deco ornamentation with a stripped classical vocabulary.

The Circle Theatre is a celebrated Washington institution: the oldest continuously operating movie theatre in the District of Columbia, the first repertory film theatre in the city, the flagship theatre of one of the most important movie-theatre chains in the Washington area, and most of all a cultural landmark in the city's incorporation of film into its arts community. Throughout its lifetime the Circle Theatre has performed pioneering work in the development of the movie theatre as a major cultural presence in the Nation's Capital.

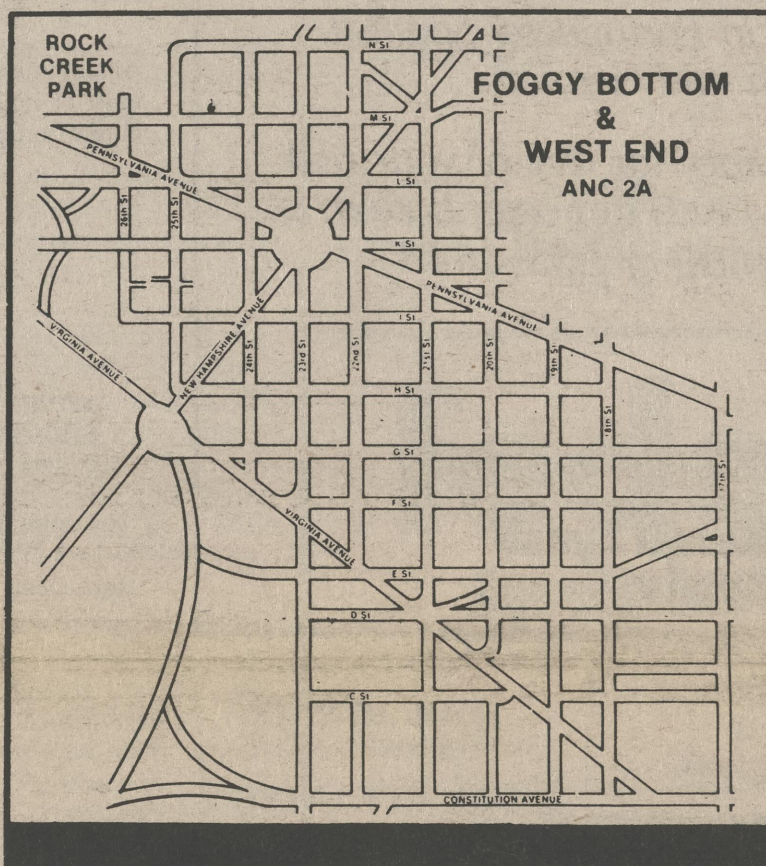
The FBA and ANC seek the historic landmark designation for the Circle Theatre because of their conviction that its significance to the development of the motion picture industry and to film culture in Washington merits such designation.

Council Bill Targets Alcohol Policy

by Jon Nowick

While many of us were fending off the summer heat with a cool drink, the D.C. Council also had alcohol-related matters on its mind. In mid-July, on the eve of the Council's summer recess, Councilman John Ray submitted a bill that would revamp the city's liquor license law

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If You Were Editor . . .

If you were editor of the *Foggy Bottom News*, what would you do with it?

While we are planning our next issue, perhaps you will take time to answer our question.

Apropos of our query, a friend of ours, a magazine editor, was once asked to address a group of sociologists meeting on the campus of Columbia University and tell the group about the function of his publication. In the question period, one of the sociologists put the question succinctly. "Now Mr. Editor," persisted the professor, "please tell us *exactly*, what is the purpose of your magazine?" Backed into a corner like that my friend answered honestly, "Well, Professor, the purpose of our magazine is to make as much money as possible for our stockholders."

That, you may be certain, is not *exactly* the purpose of the *Foggy Bottom News*, though we are glad to make as much money as we can.

But push *us* into a corner, and I guess we would have to admit that our purpose in publishing the paper is to try to cover the goings-on in Foggy Bottom. We endeavor to be accurate and interesting, and to please everybody; and we do our best to avoid libel suits, and so far have succeeded; and to help everybody to get acquainted. Do you think that's enough?

All right, sit down and write us a little letter. Tell us what you would do with the paper if *you* had it. We reserve the right to publish your letter — and *not* to publish it, too. Your letters might make a swell feature for a future issue. If *you do not want your letter published, please say so.*

As our paper is circulated free, we do not hear from indignant subscribers demanding that we cancel their subscriptions. That's one way an editor of a paper that has paid subscribers learns what readers think of him. We receive no cancellations. People who like the paper often say they do, but we never hear from people who don't like it. They're too polite. Actually, we have no way of knowing what readers like about us, what they don't like, and what they think they would like if we turned the paper over to them.

This leads us to another point that we will mention while we're on the subject. It is this: *We are willing and anxious to share the fun we have.*

When we started the paper, we thought that soon we would have all sorts of contributors up and down our streets and in our courts and apartment houses, shouting to be heard. What happened?

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Meeting Foggy Bottom Association

GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

8:00 P.M.
SEPTEMBER 29, 1986

St. Paul's Parish House
2430 K Street, N.W.

If You Were...

(continued from page 1)

Everybody stood back, waiting to be invited. Since we didn't know whom to invite, it went slowly. Some sturdy souls proved dependable, but not enough. People apparently just didn't want to deprive us of all the fun - or nearly all.

All these blank pages to fill every month! Our dog pined away for want of attention. Our dear ones abroad wondered why we never wrote them any more. Office work piled up. The *Foggy Bottom News* almost had become our Frankenstein, a monster of our creation poised to destroy us.

Under our new plan, to publish "from time to time" instead of regularly every month, perhaps we can make this truly a *community paper*. Then we can all have the kind of paper we all want, and all share the fun alike.

Will you write for the paper? If you are an experienced writer, all the better, *but that isn't necessary*. After all, we are not a professional journal. Anybody who can write a good letter home can write for the *Foggy Bottom News*.

Please call or write that you will!

And don't forget to tell us what you think of us.

The Editor

2528 Eye Street, N.W.
[Reprinted from April 1959 issue of FBN, and as pertinent now as then.]



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September 1986

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Foggy Bottom News

The *Foggy Bottom News* is a publication of the Foggy Bottom Association. All editorial and other assistance is contributed on a volunteer basis by residents of the area.

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All announcements, letters, articles, etc., welcome but must be typed **doubled spaced**. Please include an evening phone number. Send to:

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c/o West End Library
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Council Bill. . .

(continued from page 1)

for the first time in 50 years.

The bill follows a series of public hearings held by Councilman Ray's committee last spring (reported by the FBN in April). It is now before the Council as a whole, and a decision may be forthcoming within the coming weeks. If adopted in its current form, the bill could change the number and character of bars and restaurants in our neighborhood.

The intent of the bill, as stated by Councilman Ray, is to modernize the liquor license system in a way that balances the interests of businesses and residents. The current law makes no distinction between restaurants and bars and nightclubs, calling them all "restaurants" and placing them under one category (Class "C" licenses). It also requires that all of them earn at least half of their receipts from the sale of "meals."

Last fall the ABC Board, which decides on issuing liquor licenses, urged a change in the laws. It believed the meals provision, if enforced, could put hundreds of establishments out of business. Councilman Ray's bill redefines meals as "food" — a broader term under which more establishments would qualify. It lowers the food requirement from 50 to 30 percent for restaurants. It also creates new categories of licenses for taverns, nightclubs, and hotels, and exempts all of them from any minimum food requirements. It also writes into the law a series of criteria by which a restaurant or tavern would be considered "appropriate" in a given location. Such criteria could be applied to an estab-

lishment every five years, the bill says.

The ANC took objection to Ray's bill at its meeting of September 9. In a 10-point position paper, it concurred with liberalizing the "meals" definition, as proposed by Ray. But it argued that this change alone would bring most establishments into compliance with the law and urged keeping the 50 percent floor on food receipts for all DC restaurants. It also expressed concern over the creation of new license categories and the provision that they not be required to serve food.

The ANC moreover stressed the need for tighter wording in the section on criteria for "appropriateness" to ensure that the interests of residents really are protected. And it insisted that appropriateness criteria be applicable every year, not every five.

The ANC also argued that some of the bill's provisions, such as on the procedures by which citizens may petition against an establishment, actually would make it harder for residents to have a say.

FBA President Robert Brewster, in a statement the day of the ANC meeting, urged that the subject be considered at the FBA's general meeting this coming Monday evening. Two FBA Board members, Robert Charles and Dorothy Ohliger, sit on the ANC committee and helped draft the ANC's report. James Molinelli, President of the West End Citizens Association, is also a member.

The Council hearings are scheduled to take place this Monday and Tuesday. Interest-

ed parties will be able to submit testimony, including written comments, both then and in the days to follow. Neighborhood groups will also be coordinating with each other and with City Council members to come up with a solution that reflects the broadest possible community interests.

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At the September Meeting

On Monday, September 29, the first Foggy Bottom Association meeting for the 1986-87 year will be held. It will be a general business meeting, and will cover such subjects as a report on the hearing on the George Washington University Master Plan, and FBA's testimony; Columbia Hospital's proposed affiliation with Washington Healthcare Corporation (Patrick Kane of the hospital will speak); the Circle Theater; and other matters. Plan to attend to get up to date.

The meetings for the rest of the year are as follows: October 27, November 24, January 26, February 23, March 30, April 27, May 26 (Tuesday), and June 29.

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